

Commissioners Hear from Parvaim Mining and Rep. Bentz

by Emily Braswell

The Baker County Commissioners met for their first Aug. meeting last Wednesday morning. Several items of interest were brought to the table, including the first reading of Ordinance No. 2015-05 regarding Parvaim Mining, LLC which acquired a piece of property located in Baker County on part of the Sumpter Deep Gravel Mining Claim patent within the Cracker Creek area on April 30, 2015.

The property is currently zoned Rural Residential (RR-5), but is clearly located in a mineral extraction zone. Reading from the Planning Commission Staff Report, Holly Kerns clarified by saying, "Zoning maps created by Baker County in 1983 classified the property as RR-5 with no explanation as to why the patent was not considered in this zoning, as the language in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan clearly intends for patented mining claims to be zoned Mineral Extraction."

A proposal to re-zone Tax Lot 100 from RR-5 to Mineral Extraction (ME) was created in order to correct what appears to be a mapping error would not only work largely in favor of the new claimants, but also for any neighbors within earshot of the property, according to James Barkley, a representative of the mining company.

Barkley testified in favor of the ordinance on behalf of Parvaim, stating, "What we are looking to do in that particular area is clean up the benches and put in our mill site. Because it would be a lower elevation, we would have natural dirt berms and hard rock, and those protrusions would muffle some of the sounds."

Barkley says the company isn't looking to make enemies, and in fact, is willing to go above and beyond what's necessary to make sure they are being good neighbors. Locating their mill in Tax Lot 100 would also lower their cost of operation with less wear and tear on vehicles and equipment that come and go because of the close proximity of the access road. "Lower operating costs will benefit everyone in the end," he added.

As a large, international mining company, the major-

ity of their profits come from placer mining. In fact, they have a goal to develop into the largest placer mining operation in the world. Continually expanding their reach, Parvaim Mining owns or claims mineral rights to properties in Montana, Colorado, Oregon, Nevada, Mexico, Chile and several other states and countries. Their property in Mexico expands across 92,000 acres of mineral rich land. There was even a mention of economic growth with employment possibilities at the new processing site in Sumpter.

Commissioner Harvey questioned Barkley of the intention of the company, should the zone change be approved. Barkley explained how they would come in with equipment to perform explorations at several sites across the property. Because of the short time-frame before the end of the season, they wouldn't start full production until next spring. He also detailed the reclamation of the land where the previous mill sat, and the new mill location would be created with efficient and correct equipment with settling ponds being placed where they can develop into more natural looking, self-sustaining ecosystems.

The first reading was unanimously approved and the second reading has been scheduled for the next regular Commission session, on Aug. 19, at 9:30 a.m.

Representative Cliff Bentz addressed the commissioners regarding important and life-altering Bills that have been passed for the State of Oregon, and even a few matters of importance from our nation's Capitol. Of the hundreds of Bills passed, a select few were given an extra label of importance by Bentz.

The first of those would be the long-awaited Kicker refund. His take home message? The more taxes a person paid into the state, the more money they will get back from the Kicker Refund.

Oregon has a savings account, and there is actually money in it! Bentz reported that if the State doesn't suffer another recession, then the almost one billion dollars in Oregon's savings for 2015 - 2017 will grow to close



Photo by Emily Braswell
Cliff Bentz gives his Legislative Update

to 1.5 billion.

The speed limits on most Oregon roads will soon increase. The bill passed, but there are various preparations that need to take place before it can be implemented.

There is an urgent need for refuting the Owyhee Canyonlands Conservation Proposal that President Obama is getting poised to sign. It's not feasible for the economy or living. "Write letters!" Bentz exclaimed. Bentz shared it is particularly important to write letters to the editors of the large papers on the west side, especially the Oregonian.

Bentz warned against the 2019 Cadillac Health Insurance Plans tax. Any premium paid at over \$1,000 per month, or \$12,000 per year, will have the amount over the one thousand taxed by Obamacare at a rate of 40 percent. For example, if a state employee pays \$1,400 per month for their health insurance, then an additional 40 percent of the \$400 (or \$160) must be paid to Obamacare. Bentz is certain a legislative vote will mean this extra tax will be passed off onto the general public. Again this will be implemented in 2019.

One last budget killer Bentz discussed in detail was the Carbon Emissions Gas Tax.

Don't forget to get your wheelbarrows tuned up by Nov. so that you can get your 2016 ballots from your mailbox to your house.

Business Oregon Creates Loan Program to Help Small Manufacturers Grow

Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency, is launching a \$250,000 loan program to help small manufacturers increase their revenue and grow jobs in Oregon.

"Manufacturing is a cornerstone of Oregon's economy and delivers family wage jobs around the state," said Governor Kate Brown. "We must make sure our small manufacturers have the tools to compete globally so they continue to thrive and grow. This program will provide these tools to some who traditionally wouldn't have access."

Oregon has about 5,300 manufacturers and 75 percent of them have 20 or fewer employees. When they look to expand, these small companies often don't qualify for traditional commercial loan programs. The Small Manufacturing Business Expansion Program seeks to fill that gap for six to 12 companies.

"We're a state that still makes things and ships them around the world," said Sean Robbins, Business

Oregon's director. "From semiconductors to wood products to ocean going ships, Oregon's middle class is fueled by manufacturing."

Learn more about the program details and qualifications on the Business Oregon website. Please contact your local business development officer for an application.

About the Small Manufacturing Business Expansion Program

It will target traded sector companies that export their products to other states and countries in the technology, outdoor gear or wood products industries. The loans are capped at \$50,000 and may be forgiven for companies that meet specific performance goals. To be eligible, companies must have no more than 25 employees and provide at least 50 percent of the project cost from its own resources.

About Business Oregon: Our mission is to grow Oregon jobs, companies and communities.

North Powder News

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I Need Your Help

I am compiling a list of veterans, past, present, and still serving, who are from North Powder. If you know someone, please call or text me. Thank you. I would like the name and branch of service.

Library News

Aug. 22 is the last summer reading activity. It is from 11-1 p.m. Kids, bring your parents for fun and food. Awards for summer reading programs will be given that day. At dark on Aug. 21, we will be showing a movie for families. New movies have been ordered, and hopefully will be here this week. We ordered some of the minion movies and some movies for the older kids and adults (American Sniper, Alone, and several others).

We are also looking into getting a local author to come and do a reading for us. I will keep you posted.

Vacation Bible School

The United Methodist Church is having a mini Vacation Bible School for kids starting Aug. 18 at 11 a.m. -1 p.m. The kids will be served lunch, have a short study, do crafts, and have fun, fun, fun. Maggie Gutherie is the leader this year. If you have kids or know of anyone who would like to attend, send them on over at 11 a.m. on August 18.

Red Hats queen, Suzie Michaels, told me that the gals met at the Inland Cafe in Baker on Aug. 11. Everyone brought a gift for the exchange, and had a great meal and great fun.

The Lunch Bunch was treated to homemade vegetable beef soup and cream cheese peach pie. I bet it was wonderful.

Just a reminder to treat your elders well; you will be there one day. I dislike seeing children speak with disrespect to their grandparents. They were once young and vibrant just like you, so please treat them with respect and kindness. Hug your kids, smile at your neighbors, and have a blessed week. Oh, and don't forget, school starts Aug. 31.

We live in such a beautiful part of the country, with the mountains, the valley, the huge fields of golden wheat, the wonderful smell of fresh cut hay, and the breeze whispering through the tall green stalks of corn. It's great to live in such a place. I had a wonderful BLT with fresh tomatoes from the garden.

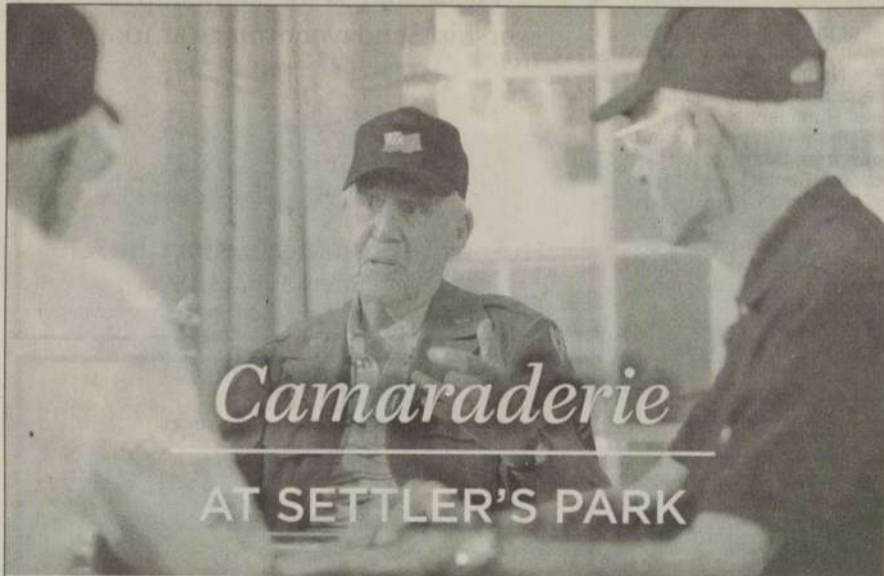
We just returned from the big city, and home looks good. We had our family reunion. We had a good time, but I tell you, no matter how much you love your dogs, they don't belong at functions with large crowds and elderly folks. There is a time and place for everything. Two huge dogs greeted us at the door, almost knocking my 96-year-old mother-in-law down. Then we had to maneuver around them to fill plates and such, not to mention the barking. Another guest showed up with a pup, and the inevitable happened. The pup knocked a woman down, and she fell on the pup, breaking its leg and hip. The owner went into panic mode. Luckily, the fallen woman wasn't carrying her small baby, and did not break her own hip or arm. So, use your heads. Dogs are not people. Not everyone loves your dog like you do. So please, be respectful of others at events. Your dog can last a few hours without you. Respect for others, especially the elderly, need to be refreshed.

Well, enough ranting on my part, but the dogs certainly put a damper on the fun and relaxing day.

Pinochle

Shelly Gray hosted the pinochle gals at her home. Judy Moe was a substitute. High score was Laura Dougherty, second was Joyce Lawyer, and low score was Martha Jane Spratling. The double pinochle prizes were won by Eleanor Blankenship and Judy Moe.

The new playground for the school is really beginning to take shape. Thank you to everyone who has donated his or her time to the project.



Camaraderie AT SETTLER'S PARK

Veteran's Benefits Seminar Thursday, August 20th at 1:30 p.m.

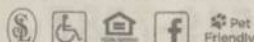
Join us at Settler's Park Assisted Living for a special presentation regarding your Veterans Benefits:
Special pension with aid and attendance
for veterans and surviving spouses.



Seating is limited for this special presentation of Veterans Benefits by Rick Gloria of Baker County Veteran Services Office. Call 541-249-4006 today to reserve your seat!

SETTLER'S PARK a Senior Lifestyle community

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Playground Under Construction



Submitted photo

Playground at North Powder school is partially finished